

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4241

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 4860

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE

1. DURING CALL BY AMBASSADOR ON FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA ORANTES SEPTEMBER 4, FOREIGN MINISTER RAISED THE SUBJECT OF BELIZE.

2. MOLINA SAID BELIZE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM OCCUPYING THE ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT THE PRESENT TIME. HE BRIEFLY REVIEWED FOR THE AMBASSADOR THE PAST HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM AND SAID GUATEMALA AT ONE POINT SOME YEARS AGO HAD MOMENTARILY THOUGHT AGREEMENT CLOSE ON ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELIZE AND GUATEMALA SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. THIS SOLUTION HAD IN THE END BEEN REJECTED BY BELIZE PRIME MINISTER PRICE WHO ALSO CONTINUED TO REJECT SUBSEQUENT PROPOSALS FOR EVEN MORE ATTENUATED RELATIONSHIPS.

3. MOLINA SAID GUATEMALA IS CONCERNED BY INCREASING ACTIVISM OF PRICE IN BELIZE AND FEARS HE MAY MAKE SOME SUDDEN MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. UNTIL NOW HE HAS BEEN RESTRAINED BY CONCERN--AND MOLINA SAID THIS CONCERN WAS WELL JUSTIFIED--
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THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD PRECIPITATE ACTION ON THE PART OF THE

GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES. NOW GUATEMALA IS NOT SO SURE THAT PRICE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESTRAINED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID GUATEMALA WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COUNSEL THE U.S. MIGHT GIVE TO INFLUENCE PRICE AGAINST TAKING HASTY ACTIONS.

4. MOLINA WENT ON TO SAY GUATEMALA IS SEEKING IMAGINATIVE NEW IDEAS FOR A SOLUTION OF THE BELIZE PROBLEM. ONE LINE HAS HELD THAT SUCH A SOLUTION MIGHT BE FOUND IN THE CONTEXT OF CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIFICATION, BUT THESE PROSPECTS SEEM SLIM AT PRESENT BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING BLOCK POSED BY HONDURAN-SALVADORAN HOSTILITY AND THE FACT THAT LITTLE REAL PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE IS BEING MADE.

5. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT SPEAKING OF PRECIPITOUS ACTION, WAS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THE GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES MIGHT BE INCLINED TOWARD SOME HASTY MOVE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER LOOKED STARTLED AND SAID NO, NOT UNLESS THEY WERE PROVOKED. THE AMBASSADOR THEN ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF RENEWED CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH. WOULD THE FOREIGN MINISTER, FOR EXAMPLE, PLAN TO TALK TO THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK LATER THIS MONTH. MOLINA SAID THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW BRITISH CONSUL IN GUATEMALA HAD AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION AS AN EXPERIENCED AND WELL-QUALIFIED DIPLOMAT AND THE PRESENCE OF A MORE SENIOR OFFICER MIGHT MAKE CONVERSATIONS HERE EASIER. MOLINA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS SO, ALTHOUGH HE HAD A GOOD WORD FOR THE PREVIOUS BRITISH CONSUL, JOHN WEYMES, WHO, HE SAID, HAD BEEN WELL-LIKED.

6. AMBASSADOR SAID THE U.S. IS A FRIEND OF ALL THE PARTIES AT INTEREST IN THE BELIZE PROBLEM AND HOPES THEY WILL BE ABLE TO

REACH AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT AMONG THEMSELVES. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE CONVERSATIONS LEADING TO THIS END BUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD UNDERSTAND WE DID NOT WISH TO BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED NOR TO FIND OURSELVES IN THE MIDDLE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED HE UNDERSTOOD BUT WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING THE U.S. COULD DO TO COUNSEL AGAINST HASTY ACTIONS IN BELIZE.
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